

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 2014

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 497: I was unavoidably detained in my district. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

but I can say Mother,
I still love you

Mr. Speaker, Jean "Granny" Harper was a dear friend, and a wonderful human being. I am so truly saddened by her passing. She will be dearly missed.

MY LIFE IS WORTH IT CAMPAIGN

HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 2014

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, few words are more isolating and strike fear in the heart of a person or the parent of a child than cancer. 36,570 Tennesseans will be diagnosed with cancer this year. Thankfully, due to the work of thousands of scientists, death rates due to all cancers continue to decline. 14 million Americans who are cancer survivors will celebrate their birthdays this year. These stories of hope in the face of a devastating illness inspire us all.

But not everyone is surviving. It is sobering to think, in the U.S., someone dies because of cancer every 60 seconds. We must continue the fight against this devastating illness. We must examine all barriers to finding the cure for all cancers.

One such barrier is the time it takes for new therapies to reach the patient. Delays occur at the regulatory level and at the reimbursement level. The time it takes for a new drug to move from the laboratory to Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval can take 10–15 years. Additional time is spent in determining the reimbursement level by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

Recently, the FDA showed that it has the flexibility to greatly shorten the time line to approval. A meningitis vaccine, not previously available in the U.S., was granted FDA approval in a remarkably shortened timeline. The landmark decision came after meningitis outbreaks at U.S. colleges resulted in deaths and disability and a great public outcry.

The same flexibility needs to be shown to those who have cancer and are reaching for promising therapies that regulators have kept just out of their reach.

I am pleased that the grassroots organization, "My Life is Worth It," has begun an online campaign to collect one million signatures in support of several critical actions that can be taken to bring innovative cancer therapies to the patients that need them most.

On September 16th there will be a powerful display around the Capitol Reflecting Pool on the National Mall. The "Lights of Hope" sponsored by the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network is estimated to involve over 15,000 committed advocates, serving as a beacon of hope to those who have been touched by cancer—while remembering those who have been lost. As we look out on the National Mall and see these lights, let Congress resolve to do all we can to ensure that those who need it most have the hope to survive and live a happy and fruitful life.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 2014

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 497 had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

RECOGNIZING THE LEADERSHIP OF STATE SENATOR DARREN SOTO

HON. ALAN GRAYSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 2014

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize Florida Senator Darren Soto. Born in New York in 1978, Darren Soto is of both Puerto Rican and Italian descent. He earned a bachelor's degree in Economics at Rutgers University and attended law school at George Washington University in Washington, DC.

Darren is a commercial and civil rights attorney proudly practicing law in Central Florida. He is an ardent defender of civil rights and is committed to rendering legal services pro bono to the community. In 2006, he was named class counsel in the federal class-action brought on behalf of Hispanic voters against the City of Kissimmee in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida.

Darren is also a former member of the Civil Service Board for the City of Orlando, and held the positions of Treasurer of the Orange County Democrats and Vice President of Communications for the Orange County Young Democrats (YD). He was also the co-host for YD's Speak Easy events, which provide a monthly forum for local and state leaders to speak to young voters.

Darren was elected to represent District 49 in the Florida House of Representatives in a special election in 2007, and was subsequently re-elected in 2008 and 2010. He has passed several important pieces of legislation including the Luis Rivera-Ortega Street Racing Act, the Firefighter Death Benefit Bill (inspired by the death of Volusia County firefighter John C. Curry), and the Bus Driver Notification Bill. He has also been a critical voice in defeating attempts to convert Florida to non-judicial foreclosures, stopping the split of the Florida Supreme Court, and blocking a proposed anti-Hispanic Arizona-style immigration law in Florida.

In 2012, Darren was elected to represent District 14 in the Florida Senate. He is currently serving as Vice Chair on the Judiciary Committee. Senator Soto also serves on the Appropriations Subcommittee on Criminal and Civil Justice, the Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government, the Community Affairs Committee, the Environmental Preservation and Conservation Committee, and the Ethics and Elections Committee.

In May of 2013, Darren married Amanda Betlow, an Orange County school teacher.

I am honored to recognize Senator Darren Soto, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for his leadership and contributions to the Central Florida community.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JEAN H. "GRANNY" HARPER

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 2014

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Mrs. Jean H. Harper, who sadly passed away on August 28, 2014. "Granny," as Jean was affectionately called by loved ones, community members, and those in her church family, lived a life of service and selflessness.

Born in Avondale, North Carolina, on January 14, 1921, she was the fifth child of David and Alda Sims Hart's twelve children. Shortly after, her family relocated to Washington, DC, where she resided for the rest of her life.

Jean worked as a dietitian at Freedman's Hospital (the forerunner of Howard University Hospital) for 32 years. While working at the hospital, she met the love of her life, James "Jimmy" Harper, who she soon married before the birth of her sole child, her daughter Barbara Jean. In 1954, the family moved to their eventual life-home on Taylor Street NW., She remained a devoted servant of her community and missionary within her church, working actively up until her passing in the Pastor's Aide Ministry of the Trinity A.M.E. Zion Church.

However, Jean was most devoted to her family. She could always be found with Barbara, her grandchildren, great grandson, and other members of her extended family and close friends. She enjoyed traveling, cooking and socializing, but was renowned for being a problem solver for all who came into contact with her.

I had the privilege to know "Granny" through her daughter Barbara, a former staff member of my office. I was always delighted to check in with her over a birthday call or simply reminiscing about the old days. She was a comforting soul and devoted woman of God, who had time for anyone that needed her. While "Granny" is no longer with us, her spirit and loving memory will always live on.

In memory of her mother, Barbara recited a poem by Calan Booth at Jean's funeral entitled, "Mother," which I include, as it resonated with me deeply:

Without you Mother,
I would not be here,
for the start of my life
came from you Mother dear.
When I was a child
you sacrificed for me,
and shaped what I would be.
Now the years have gone
and I'm not always there,
but I know you still worry,
about my welfare
I can never pay for
all you've had to do,